



File Code: 1950

Date: January 11, 2011

Dear Forest User,

The Lochsa Ranger District of the Clearwater National Forest is proposing to relocate Musselshell Creek from what is believed to be a man-made tunnel to its historic channel. Realignment of the Musselshell Tunnel channel would return the stream to its historic location while restoring passage and habitat conditions for fish and other aquatic organisms. The tunnel is located in T35N, R6E, Section 5 (see attached map).

The primary purpose of the Musselshell Creek Tunnel relocation is to improve access to potential habitat for fish, including steelhead, chinook, and westslope cutthroat, and other aquatic organisms, by removing a passage barrier and returning the channel to reference condition. The removal of this barrier will open approximately 15 miles of habitat currently blocked to fish passage.

Preliminary design features include:

- Movement of approximately 500 ft of Forest Service Road 540 into the hillside to make sufficient room for the realigned channel (in its historic location) as the valley within this reach is tightly constrained between steep hillsides;
- Movement of approximately 500 ft of Musselshell Creek into a newly constructed channel in its historic location, adjacent to Road 540;
- Regrading of this new channel to match the existing Musselshell Creek channel cross sectional shape and stream slope;
- Replacement/relocation of the existing cross-drain culvert(s);
- Installation of a separation berm in the vicinity of the tunnel inlet to prevent migration of the stream back to the manmade channel and tunnel; and
- Installation of step grade control structures in the new channel.

Because movement of Road 540 and realignment of the Musselshell Creek channel are ground disturbing activities, several mitigation measures would be utilized as needed to prevent excessive levels of sediment from entering streams. Mitigation measures may include any combination of the following:

- Using Best Management Practices (BMPs) to maintain slope stability and minimize soil disturbance, erosion, and sediment delivery;
- Monitoring instream sediment levels during construction activities;
- Limiting sedimentation by diverting flow around work sites and/or trapping sediment below work areas;
- Using the existing tunnel as a diversion during construction of the new channel;
- Revegetating disturbed soils with grasses for short-term erosion protection and with shrubs and trees for long-term soil stability;



- Mulching with native materials where available, or using weed-free straw, to ensure coverage of exposed soils;
- Adding roughness and diversity elements including rock or log weirs, barbs and rootwads to dissipate energy in the newly restored stream channels;
- Armoring channel banks and dissipating energy with rock, wood and native plant clumps whenever possible; and
- Coordinating activities to avoid spawning times and locations.

The Clearwater National Forest is now seeking comments from individuals, organizations, local and state governments, and other federal agencies that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. Your specific comments to the proposal will help identify key issues and possible alternative ways of meeting the project purpose and need. Please submit your comments within 30 days of the date that the legal ad for this project appears in the *Lewiston Tribune*. Comments may be submitted in writing, orally, or through electronic means. Those who respond to this invitation for comments will be notified when the Environmental Assessment for this project is available for a thirty-day public comment period. If you do not submit comments at this time, but wish to receive a copy of the decision, please notify us that you would like to remain on the mailing list for this project.

Please address written comments to: Anne Connor, Hydrologist, Clearwater National Forest, 12730 U.S. Highway 12, Orofino, Idaho, 83544.

Should you have questions, need further information, or wish to submit oral comments, please contact Anne Connor during normal business hours via telephone (208-476-8235) or in person.

Electronic comments may be submitted to aconnor@fs.fed.us. The subject line must contain the name of the project for which you are submitting comments (i.e. Musselshell Tunnel Channel Realignment). Acceptable formats are MS Word, Word Perfect, or RTF. When commenting, please include the following: (1) your name, address, and (if possible) your telephone number, and organization represented, (if any); (2) title of the document on which you are submitting comments; (3) specific facts and related rationale concerning this project that you feel should be considered.

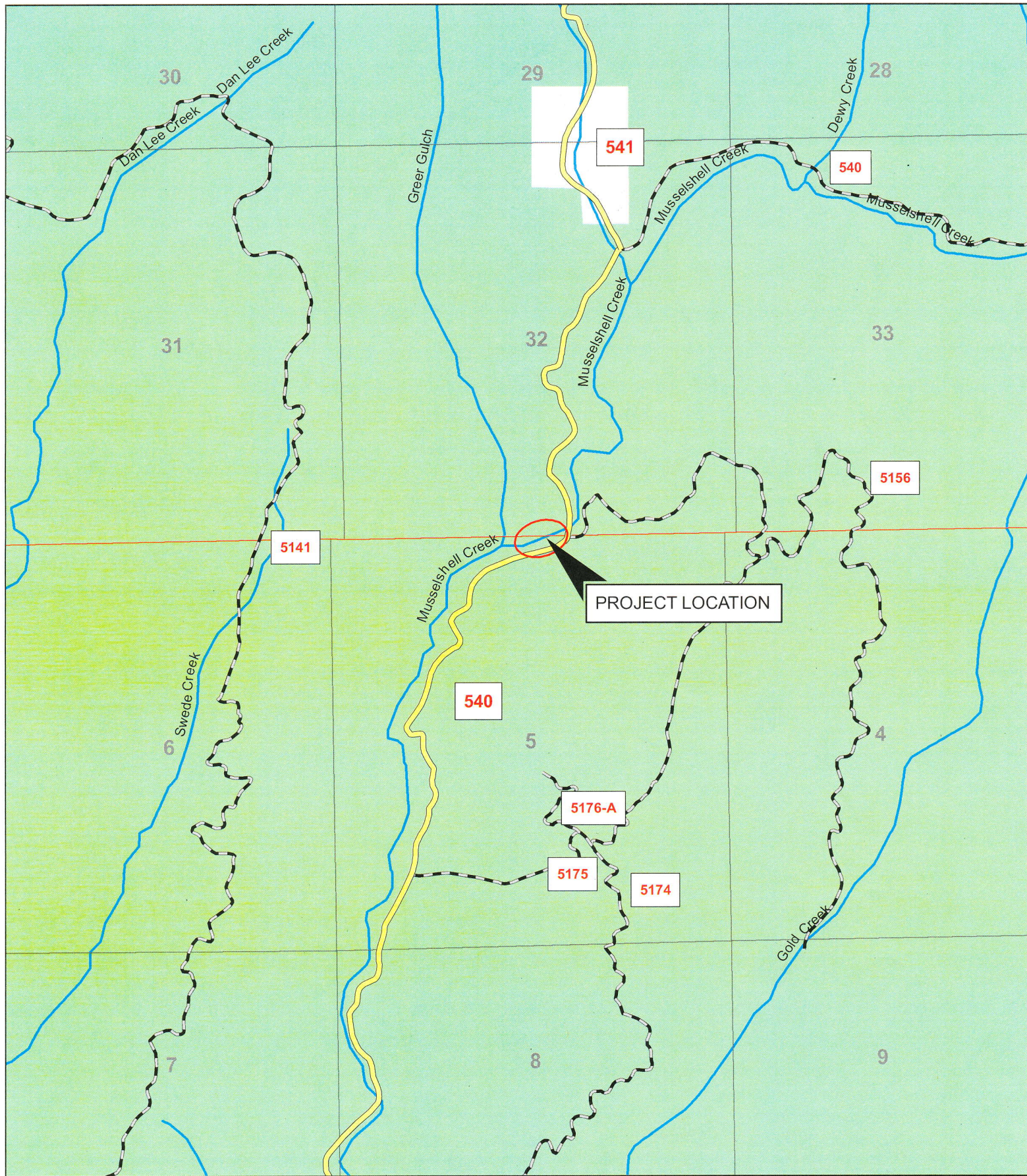
Thank you for your interest in this project proposal. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely



CRAIG TRULOCK
District Ranger

Attachment



1:20,392

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Musselshell Tunnel Channel Realignment